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THE PROBLEM OF EUROPEAN DISARMAMENT.

No problem of practical statesmanship has ever confronted the world of greater moment and of greater delicacy than that of European disarmament at the present time. A few years ago, though a small number of men saw the question rising in the distance with prodigious rapidity, yet most people of all ranks would have said that there was no such problem and that none would ever arise. The statesmen of no nation cared to look beyond what seemed to them the immediate necessities of their own country. The possible results of military rivalry they carefully hid from their eyes, and shrugged their shoulders and smiled when told that a chasm of bankruptcy and general ruin was yawning at the end of the course on

which they were entering. Even now, though many are opening their eyes to the deplorable condition into which the Continental nations have been plunged, yet most of those who are in official positions are still controlled more by fear and blind zeal than by good judgment and, like a teamster beating his poor horses when the wagon has sunk to the axle in mire, they are attempting to goad on to further sacrifices the already overloaded and despairing people.

But the limit has been at last reached and the problem must be tackled without much further delay. In all the national budgets there are deficits for which provision can with the extremest difficulty be made by any sort of new tax which is acceptable to the people and their deputies. It is doubtful whether another deficit in the budgets, which is sure to come next year, if present conditions continue, can be met at all. It is this fact, patent now to all eyes, which is forcing into consideration the problem of disarmament, for this word disarmament alone expresses the real nature of the question pressing for solution.

There is another reason why we may expect an early attempt at disarmament. While it is primarily the deficits which are forcing the public functionaries to take up the question, back of these deficits are the burdens which have so long rested heavily on the people. These burdens have in many cases been borne patiently and patriotically, but they have grown galling after the lapse of years, and it is beginning to be seen that it is not the real interests of the country which are imposing them. Multitudes all over Europe are thinking and now daring to say that individuals have rights which no State can justly take away. An old lady in Germany, to whom an American traveller expressed surprise when he saw her trudging along with a heavy burden on her shoulders, said patriotically and poetically: "Why, I am carrying the German army on my back." Now, it may be very easy and refreshing to carry the German army, or some other army, on one's back for a little while. But such a burden becomes insupportably heavy after twenty-five years of trudging under it, especially when battalion after battalion has been added to the load. The revolt against this long-continued carrying of useless burdens is growing deep and widespread. It is making itself known through the rapidly multiplying peace societies, through the propaganda of the Socialists, through the awakened press and through representatives of the people in the

parliaments. In some countries the revolt means ultimate revolution, and revolution of a very desperate and sweeping kind, unless its demands are speedily heard.

In face of this rising protest of the people it is not strange that the authorities should pause and think. They can not choke the deficits; it is more perilous still to try to choke the people. Disarmament, then, is in the air. It is in the mouths of the people. It is on the pens of editors. It is reaching the war-ministers' ears. It is knocking at the doors of cabinets. The demand has even gone so far that men are asking, "How shall it be begun?" "Who will take the first step?" When these questions are asked the difficulty and delicacy of the problem become at once apparent. Europe has a huge elephant on its hands. How shall he be caged or slain? Everybody is afraid to tackle him, though he is stalking about swinging his trunk viciously and setting his big feet crushingly on everything which comes in his way.

As a step towards the real thing to be done, it has been proposed that the nations simply agree to call a halt and not go any further on the perilous road of armaments. Abstractly, that is, of course, the first thing to be done. Practically, it is not so simple. Some of the nations might say with a show of reason: "Our armaments are much inferior, proportionately, to those of others; wait till we get even, and then we will agree to stop." Another proposed method of commencing the solution is that of a truce for ten years, or until the close of the present century, during which the nations shall agree not to go to war and not to increase their armaments. The first part of this proposition, that is not to go to war for a certain specified time, would, if carried out, do very little to relieve the situation unless the second part of it, not to increase armaments, were carried out at the same time, and this would meet with the same objection which is given above. A third method proposed is to agree to reduce the time of service everywhere to one year. This would reduce the expenses of the service by possibly one-half and would leave the nations relatively just where they are, both as to the size of their armies and the efficiency of the discipline acquired. But this plan is likely to meet with the apparently grave objection that the efficiency of the discipline acquired in one year would very imperfectly compensate for the great expense incurred, and that it would be just as well to disband the armies outright. The method of gradual and proportionate disarmament which has been often talked of would meet with the same objection previously given, that some of the nations are much behind the others in their military development.

It is not our purpose in this article to outline what we might think to be the wisest way in which to proceed, but only to state the urgency of the problem and the difficulties in the way of its solution. These difficulties, as well as the problem itself, all spring ultimately out of the sentiments of ill feeling, or at least of fear and distrust,

which the nations bear toward each other. These must, in part at least, give way before the situation can in any way be relieved. We have no doubt that they are giving way, and this leads us to hope that something may be done at an early date. The wisest course and in fact the only one which can be taken at present is to follow the suggestion which is being urged in England of calling a Conference of the Powers to discuss the situation and to see what can be done. If the Governments will consent to meet together, by their representatives, and candidly and freely consider the situation, they will not be long in finding some practical way of disposing of the question, however difficult it may seem when looked at theoretically. Without such a Conference nothing can be done. One ought to be called at the earliest practicable date, in which men of wisdom from the different countries may meet together, without prejudice, without preconceived schemes which they are not willing to give up for better ones, and deliberate how they may relieve Europe from the curse which is fast blighting it. Such a Conference might find it wise to adopt some one of the methods of relief which have already been proposed, or some combination of them, or something still more radical and far-reaching, but if once convened it will be practically sure to find some solution which when tried will surprise us all with its simplicity and naturalness. B. F. T.

THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF WM. F. DAVIS IN BEHALF OF PEACE.

[Doubtless an army of considerable size could be gathered together of those who had been convinced of the unlawfulness and sinfulness of engaging in carnal warfare, through reading Dymond's excellent treatise upon that matter. Some remarks dropped by my friend, William F. Davis, of Boston, concerning the agency of Dymond's essay in helping him to correct views upon the subject, led me to request from him a statement thereupon. His response is appended. He has known what it is during the time since the war to battle bravely and faithfully under the banner of his Immanuel — notably in the lumber camps of Northern Wisconsin, and in Boston itself where, as we remember, he was treated to eleven months in jail for the offence of gathering a crowd by reading the Bible on that same historic common, which, upwards of two centuries ago, witnessed the hanging of four Friends for the testimony of Jesus.—*Josiah W. Leeds.*]

Early in 1861 I was employed in a cotton mill in South Carver, Massachusetts, by a firm entitled Jenkins Bros. & Co. My mother's older brother, Wm. Franklin Jenkins, after whom I was named, had been an intimate friend of Elihu Burritt, and from him, if I remember right, had received a copy of Jonathan Dymond's essays, among which was the essay on war, which I read in the year 1860 with profound interest, as the book had been